

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 284104
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 284104

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADORS ONLY

FOL RPT LONDON 19334 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DTD 28 NOV 77

QUOTE: S E C R E T LONDON 19334

NODIS.

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM NATO UK

SUBJECT: FOUR POWER CONSULTATIONS ON SALT

REF: STATE 283204

1. IN ABSENCE OF TONY DUFF AND PATRICK MOBERLY, BOTH OF WHOM WERE OUT OF TOWN, ON NOVEMBER 28 WE DREW ON POINTS REFTEL IN DISCUSSION WITH JOHN WILBERFORCE, HEAD OF FCO'S DEFENCE DEPARTMENT.

2. WILBERFORCE SAID THAT HIS REACTION WOULD BE PERSONAL BUT THOUGHT FORMAL HMG RESPONSE WOULD BE ALONG SAME
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 284104

LINES. HE ENTIRELY AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE OR FRUITFUL TO HOLD FOUR POWER TALKS THIS WEEK. THERE WAS SIMPLY TOO MUCH PREPARATION THAT NEEDED TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO MAKE A MEETING USEFUL. THUS, IF GERMANS ASK FOR HMG VIEW ON MATTER OF TIMING, BRITISH WILL BE INCLINED TO SAY THAT FOUR POWER GET TOGETHER THIS WEEK IS NOT PRACTICAL.

3. WILBERFORCE THOUGHT THAT DECEMBER 7 MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION WAS GOOD IDEA. IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY VALUABLE TO CONSIDER HOW THESE RELATED ISSUES SHOULD BE TREATED AT THE NATO COUNCIL MEETING.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE AGENDA FOR THE MINISTERIAL EXCHANGE, WILBERFORCE SUGGESTED THAT THE "SCHMIDT THESIS" SHOULD FORM A BACKGROUND FOR THE TALKS RATHER THAN BE A LENGTHY TOPIC OF DISCUSSION. EMPHASIS ON SCHMIDT'S BROAD SECURITY FRAMEWORK WOULD IN WILBERFORCE'S VIEW LEAD TO PHILOSOPHICAL SORT OF DISCUSSION. HE SAID THAT HE HAD IMPRESSION THAT THIS GERMAN INITIATIVE WAS RELATED TO SOMETHING MUCH MORE SPECIFIC. GERMANS WERE CONCERNED THAT PROSPECTIVE SALT II AGREEMENT CONTAINED CRUISE MISSILE LIMITATIONS WHEREAS SOVIET INTERMEDIATE SYSTEMS WERE NOT CONSTRAINED. FRG SEEMS TO SEE POSITIVE ADVANTAGE IN BRINGING USSR INTERMEDIATE SYSTEMS INTO SALT III AND IN THIS CONTEXT, ACCORDING TO WILBERFORCE, APPEARS CLOSE TO SAYING THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO INTRODUCE THAT OBJECTIVE INTO THE SALT II STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES. WILBERFORCE THOUGHT THAT IT WAS THIS POSSIBILITY WHICH GENERATED URGENCY OF GERMAN DESIRE FOR FOUR POWER CONSULTATIONS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 284104

5. HE SAID IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW IT WOULD BE PREMATURE AT THIS STAGE FOR THE ALLIES TO THINK OF COMMITTING THEMSELVES THROUGH THE SALT II STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES TO BRINGING SOVIET INTERMEDIATE SYSTEMS INTO THE NEGOTIATION. MUCH MORE WORK NEEDED TO BE DONE IN CAPITALS ON GRAY AREA SYSTEMS BEFORE ANY SUCH STEP COULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED.

6. WILBERFORCE DID THINK, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE

USEFUL FOR MINISTERS TO CONSIDER WHOLE QUESTION OF GRAY AREA SYSTEMS AT DECEMBER 7 MEETING. CRUISE MISSILES WOULD OF COURSE BE ANOTHER SUBJECT OF THAT CONVERSATION AND IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR THE MINISTERS TO COORDINATE THEIR PRESS LINE IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT A "SENSIBLE BALANCE OF OPINION" IS REPORTED CONCERNING EUROPEAN ATTITUDES. ON THAT POINT, WILBERFORCE SAID THAT THE MORE EXPLICIT SECRETARY VANCE CAN BE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE TEMPORARY CHARACTER OF CRUISE MISSILE LIMITATIONS, THE EASIER IT WOULD BE TO KEEP THE NAC DISCUSSION AND THE SUBSTANCE OF SUBSEQUENT PRESS BACKGROUNTERS "IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE." WILBERFORCE

SUGGESTED THAT THE MINISTERS WOULD ALSO NO DOUBT WISH TO GO OVER ERW ISSUE. THUS, TOPICS WHICH WOULD BE ON MINISTERIAL AGENDA WOULD BE GRAY AREA SYSTEMS IN GENERAL, THE CRUISE MISSILE IN PARTICULAR, AND ERW. IN HIS VIEW SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR OFFICIAL LEVEL MEETING LATER IN THE MONTH NEED NOT BE APPROVED BY MINISTERS ON DECEMBER 7. HE STRESSED THAT THESE MATTERS WOULD ALSO BE DISCUSSED IN BRUSSELS BY DEFENSE MINISTERS AND IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO AVOID GETTING LINES AND SUBSTANCE OF EXCHANGES TANGLED. FINALLY, WILBERFORCE CONCLUDED BY OBSERVING THAT HMG HAD NO WORD YET WHETHER THE FRENCH WOULD PARTICIPATE. HE SAID IF FRANCE DECIDES NOT TO PLAY, THE UK COULD WELL BE INTERESTED IN TRILATERAL CONSULTATIONS ON THESE INTERRELATED
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PAGE 04 STATE 284104

ISSUES.

7. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT TO PARIS AND BONN.

BREWSTER UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 29-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
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